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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
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Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

STATUS OF PREPARATION OF PUBLICATIONS, STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Written statement submitted by the Association Droit à l'ingérence humanitaire

The attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to the following written statement submitted by the officers of the Association Droit à l'ingérence humanitaire.

[14 December 1992]

CIVIC DUTY TO INTERVENE

1. With the entry into force in 1976 of the two Covenants and the Protocol, which, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, form the International Bill of Human Rights and give force of law to the most fundamental human rights, the United Nations gave mankind the potential means to strive for a fraternal world.

2. There is still an enormous amount of work to be done to counterbalance the more or less democratic State powers in both North and South that are taking advantage of the virtuality of international law in order to flout it.

This great undertaking would involve the establishment of an International Court of Human Rights, a criminal court before which any group or people in danger could bring its case. The accused country would be entitled to an impartial defence which would reveal the democracies' errors, compromises and complicities.

3. Although Governments bear much of the responsibility for the state of a world where barbarism is more universal than full respect for human rights, the responsibility of ordinary citizens is no less great. Promoting the magnificent principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is as much the duty of individuals as of States (preamble and art. 29 of the 1948 Declaration and preamble to the two 1966 Covenants).

4. International peace and security are thus not the exclusive province of the Security Council, but a vast worldwide endeavour in which citizens and peoples have a genuine role to play. This way of looking at the civic responsibility of all individuals shows that the duty to intervene to save a society which is in the process of being dehumanized must be made known with great courtesy, rigour and perseverance by the governed to the governors. Our Association would like the Secretary-General of the United Nations to channel this movement and use it as a lever.

5. This civic duty to intervene, which has been made necessary by the devastating times our civilizations are going through and leads straight to the highest United Nations body, will be obsolete once an International Court of Human Rights has done justice, in the name of mankind, to persecuted peoples and groups.